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**Triton College**

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### **Triton College's TRIUMPH & SURGE Program Empowers Students to Succeed**



*TRIUMPH & SURGE members and advisors with (far left)  
Triton College President Mary-Rita Moore.*

RIVER GROVE, Ill. –Triton College's TRIUMPH & SURGE Program empowers students to achieve academic success and thrive in life. Through mentoring, coaching, career development and personal support, TRIUMPH & SURGE goes beyond academics to help students overcome challenges, reach their goals and build a brighter future.

TRIUMPH (Transforming and Impacting Undergraduate Men Pursuing Higher Education) & SURGE (Sisterhood of Undergraduate Representing Great Excellence), provides opportunities for young men and women students to succeed both in college and beyond.

For Triton alumna Neicy Walker of Cicero, Illinois, the program was life-changing. "It was a non-judgmental environment that helped me thrive," said Walker, who credits TRIUMPH & SURGE Director Stephanie Townsend for inspiring her to aim high and apply to out-of-state universities. With Townsend's support, Walker now attends Johnson C. Smith University in Charlotte, North Carolina, and "loving life."

“What makes TRIUMPH & SURGE unique is the bond we build with students,” said Townsend. “We make sure they know someone has their back, which motivates students to finish school.”

Launched in 2015 with TRIUMPH for men of color and expanded in 2017 with SURGE for women of color, the two programs combined in 2023 to create a more inclusive community. Today, TRIUMPH & SURGE welcomes all Triton College students, including those from the General Education Development (GED) and Workforce Equity Initiative (WEI) programs.

“TRIUMPH & SURGE is a community,” said Andre Bobb, student success advisor at Triton. “It’s a program designed to support students in every aspect of their lives – academics, career planning, mental health, financial aid, transportation and more,” he said, adding that the goal is to help students succeed, no matter the challenge.

“Sometimes students just need that extra level of support and care,” added Delettre Massey, student success advisor at Triton. “Outside of instructors and academic advisors, we are there. We are the ‘other people’ that always have their back.”

The program has made a significant impact on students like Angel Stackhouse and Edgardo “Eddie” Ventura. Stackhouse, a first-generation student, said TRIUMPH & SURGE offered help in navigating college and that Townsend encouraged Stackhouse to apply to the ophthalmic technician program, where Stackhouse will be graduating in May 2027.

“I joined TRIUMPH & SURGE because I am a first-generation student, so I didn’t know that much about the college scene,” Stackhouse said. “I randomly met Stephanie one day and told her I was interested in the program, which started my journey.”

Like Stackhouse, Ventura received a lot of positive motivation from TRIUMPH & SURGE staff and was inspired to get actively involved at Triton.

“I enjoy a lot of the people that are involved with TRIUMPH & SURGE, including the students and staff,” said Ventura. “The students are very kind, they’re very open, and a lot of them are just as active as I am.”

For student Hallah Elder, TRIUMPH & SURGE helped her with several aspects of her life from mental health to financial aid.

“I love how TRIUMPH & SURGE is very supportive,” said Elder. “They are really there for you when you need them.”

TRIUMPH & SURGE also offers a robust mentoring program that matches students with mentors who share similar backgrounds. Additional support includes sessions like “Fella’s Fellowship” and “Her Haven,” and professional development workshops that focus on empowerment, entrepreneurship and skill development. Other activities include cultural events in partnership

with Student Life, like “Food for the Soul” for Black History Month and Hispanic Heritage Month festivities.

“We hosted 53 events this year,” said Townsend. In addition to workshop and community-building activities, “our college tours have helped several students transfer and transition to four-year universities, both in and out of state.”

TRIUMPH & SURGE’s commitment to go “above and beyond” ensures that students receive the care and support they need to thrive.

“Our students will always have encouragement here,” explained Townsend. “We advocate for our students. Our program is completely free, and everyone is welcome.”

TRIUMPH & SURGE is accepting applications for the 2024-2025 academic year. Visit <http://triton.edu/students/triumph-and-surge> for more information.

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## **ABOUT TRITON COLLEGE**

Triton College is an institution of higher education dedicated to student success. Triton offers more than 120 degree and certificate programs designed for students to realize their career aspirations and effectively compete in a global economy. The college campus spans 110 acres in River Grove, Illinois, holds classes at satellite locations and offers online learning opportunities. Triton’s exemplary faculty and staff work to provide high-quality, convenient and affordable educational opportunities to more than 10,000 students each year. Triton College is a member of The Community Colleges of Illinois and accredited by the Higher Learning Commission. Learn more at <http://triton.edu/>.